



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

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OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

September 22, 2011

Miriam Valentine
Denali Park Planning
Denali National Park and Preserve
PO Box 9
Denali Park, Alaska 99755

Re: Comments on the Draft EIS for the Denali National Park Vehicle Management Plan,
EPA Project #08-050-NPS.

Dear Ms. Valentine:

We have reviewed the National Park Service (NPS) draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Denali National Park and Preserve (DNPP) Vehicle Management Plan. Our review was conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. Based on our review, we have assigned a rating of LO (Lack of Objections). For your reference, a copy of the rating system we used to conduct our review is enclosed.

We believe that the draft EIS does a satisfactory job of analyzing a reasonable range of alternatives for vehicle management, as well as the impacts associated with the alternatives. We appreciate the NPS's consideration of the visitor experience in addition to the traditional impacts to environmental resources. While we believe and agree with the NPS that both Alternative B and Alternative C are environmentally preferable, we also recognize that Alternative C provides greater types of visitor opportunities, thus enhancing the public's appreciation of DNPP resources, which can have additional benefits. Alternative C may also provide more opportunities to lower income and disabled visitors. We fully support the adaptive management strategy identified in the draft EIS and believe that the flexibility provided by that strategy will enable the NPS to minimize impacts while enhancing visitor experience for many years to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this draft EIS. If you have questions about our comments, please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or by electronic mail at Reichgott.christine@epa.gov, or you may contact Jennifer Curtis of my staff in Anchorage at (907) 271-6324 or curtis.jennifer@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine B. Reichgott".

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit

Enclosure

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Rating System for
Draft Environmental Impact Statements
Definitions and Follow-Up Action***

Environmental Impact of the Action

LO – Lack of Objections

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC – Environmental Concerns

EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce these impacts.

EO – Environmental Objections

EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no-action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU – Environmentally Unsatisfactory

EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1 – Adequate

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis of data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2 – Insufficient Information

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3 – Inadequate

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act and or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

* From EPA Manual 1640 Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment. February, 1987.